CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES

City of Vancouver Archives Newsletter

City of Vancouver Archives News

The City of Vancouver Archives Newsletter reports on the Archives' achievements, challenges, activities, and events, and presents profiles of staff, users, researchers, donors, and members of the Friends of the Vancouver City Archives. We hope you enjoy the newsletter's second issue.

I am pleased to announce that Heather Gordon has taken up her responsibilities as Archives Manager after a temporary assignment with our records management project. Heather is a graduate of the Master of Archival Studies program at the University of British Columbia and most recently served as records manager for the City of Coquitlam. Thanks to Heather for coordinating this issue of the newsletter.

We invite you to come to the Archives or visit our website to learn more about our holdings. We also welcome suggestions about the newsletter and ideas for stories or features, as well as questions, comments and suggestions about the City of Vancouver Archives website or any other feature of our program. Feel free to contact me at 604-873-6584 or Heather Gordon at 604-736-8561.

Reuben Ware, City Archivist

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Friends of the Vancouver City Archives

Join the Friends and get involved in helping the City of Vancouver Archives preserve Vancouver's documentary heritage. For information about the Friends, see back cover.

Featured Fonds

Fonds is an archives word that means the whole of the documents, regardless of form or medium, created and accumulated by a person, family, organization, or other corporate body in the course of that creator's activities or functions. Archives work by acquiring fonds, preserving them, and organizing them for use and access. Each issue of the newsletter focuses on a recent acquisition or fonds. This issue's feature is the L.D. Taylor fonds.

L.D. Taylor Fonds

By Reuben Ware

As submitted to the BC Historical News

In September, the City of Vancouver Archives acquired the private records of Louis Denison Taylor (1857-1946), early Vancouver newspaperman and one of the City's most far-thinking, colourful and controversial Mayors. Of course, there are extensive holdings of official City records of Mayors and Councillors at the Archives, but private records and archives of former Mayors of Vancouver are scarce. Thus, the Taylor acquisition is a unique and important archive for documenting the City's history, especially the first four decades of the 20th century.

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CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES
1150 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6J 3J9
Tel: 604-736-8561 Fax: 604-736-0626 www.vancouver.ca/archives

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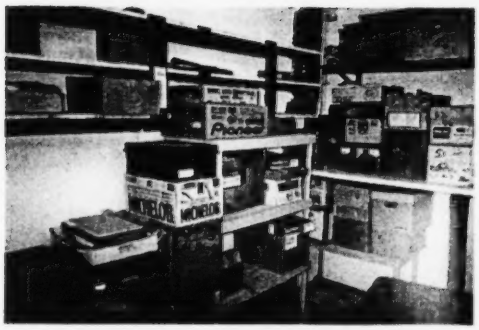
L.D. Taylor Fonds, contd.

Known widely as "L.D.," Louis Denison Taylor achieved political feats some of which are not likely ever to be equalled – he won nine Mayoralty elections (his record was nine wins, seven losses), was the first Mayor to win re-election after a loss, and the oldest person ever elected Mayor (age 75 in 1932). Included in his totals are wins in both of 1915's two Mayoralty contests. L.D.'s January 1915 victory was nullified, but he won again in March by an even larger margin. Serving his eight terms between 1910 and 1934, he was Vancouver's populist voice of reform and advocated a number of progressive ideas – the 8-hour day, universal suffrage for women, property taxation based on land, city planning, and regional cooperation. The City of Vancouver Archives has a special connection with L.D. in that his support for the efforts of Major James Skitt Matthews was instrumental in the 1933 establishment of the City's archives.[1]

When L.D. died in 1946, one of his sons came to Vancouver from California to look after his affairs and make arrangements for his apartment at Granville Mansions. L.D.'s personal effects, library, apartment furniture, papers and archives were taken to California and held by the family ever since. In 2001, former City Archivist Sue Baptie made contact with Roy Denison Werbel, L.D.'s great grandson, in San Pablo, California and explored the possibility of having L.D.'s archives returned to Vancouver. When Dan Francis was researching materials for his biography of L.D., Roy Werbel contacted him and offered the use of L.D.'s archives for his research.[2] In 2004 this led to renewed contact with the City of Vancouver Archives and, earlier this year, to a successful acquisition of the Taylor archives and their transfer to Vancouver.

In June, I travelled to San Pablo and surveyed more than 80 boxes of family archives, identifying those parts of it pertaining to L.D. (45 containers). The inventory describes correspondence, notebooks, clippings, election material, financial records, leases, mining stock, and photographs. Personal artefacts include gavels, business cards, wallets, and a compass. One significant part of the acquisition is L.D.'s letters to his sons, Ted and Ken, and to his father-in-law, Osborne Pierce. These offer personal commentary on family matters, as well as political and civic affairs.



The Taylor fonds before packing in California
Photos by Reuben Ware

When the details of the acquisition had been set with the family, arrangements were made for Gillian Boal, conservator from the University of California Library (Berkeley) to prepare and pack the materials for shipment to Vancouver. A shipper made the pick-up, Customs was cleared, and the records arrived in Vancouver. The boxes were first placed in the Archives' freezer vault at -18 Celsius to eradicate any mites or other creatures, and the records are now safely stored in the stack area of the City of Vancouver Archives.[3] Plans are now being made to process the records (arrange and describe, re-folder and re-box, and possibly microfilm them), and we hope that the records can be made available for research by the end of 2007.

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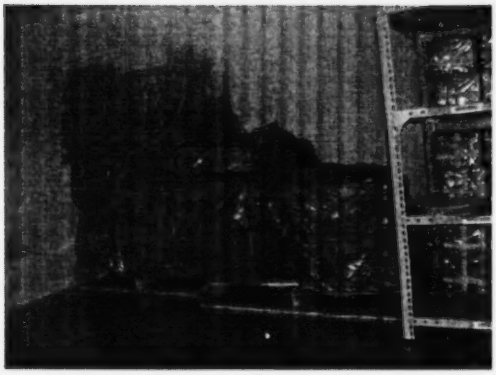

Freeze fumigating the Taylor fonds
Photo by Sue Bigelow

[1] Mary Rawson, "Eight Times Mayor of Vancouver, Single-Tax Taylor: Louis Denison Taylor, 1857-1946," British Columbia Historical News, vol. 34, no. 1, Winter 2000, p. 25-26.

[2] Daniel Francis, *L.D.: Mayor Louis Taylor and the Rise of Vancouver*, (Vancouver: 2004), p. 7. I would like to thank Roy Werbel for his interest in seeing the records returned to Vancouver and for his assistance in making it happen.

[3] Funds for the Archives' freezer vault came from the Friends of the Vancouver City Archives and the BC Gaming Commission, 2002.

Recent Acquisitions

Col. Victor Spencer Family Films

In 2005 Janine and Richard Newbury donated a collection of 87 16 mm films, dated 1920 to 1968, relating to the Col. Victor Spencer family. These films document family matters such as weddings, homes, ranches, sports and recreational activities, and Spencer's Department Store parades. Of interest in the collection are films of the three ranches owned by the Spencer family, the Diamond S at Dog Creek, the Pavilion Ranch at Pavilion and the Earlscourt Ranch at Lytton. Family activities at Aberthau, the family home in Point Grey, show the family tobogganing on the streets surrounding the home in 1928 and the Spencer children and pets playing in the garden and grounds in 1930. The collection contains two colour films from the early 1930s utilizing a rare motion picture process known as Lenticular Kodacolor.

Professional Experience and Internships

The University of British Columbia's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies offers opportunities for students to gain real world experience in libraries and archives. The City of Vancouver Archives is always pleased to have such students assist with projects. In addition to the students gaining valuable work experience, the Archives benefits by having holdings become more accessible.

Below is a sampling of projects UBC students have worked on at the Archives.

Engineering Department Slide Collection

In 2004 and 2005 Seth Dalby appraised a collection of approximately 8,000 35 mm colour slides. After surveying and appraising the collection, 5,122 slides were selected for description at the series, subseries and file level in the Archives' database. The slides document the core services of the Vancouver Department of Engineering (solid waste, streets, transportation, and water and sewers), as well as the planning and implementation of major projects between 1970 and 1988, a period marked by rapid change and growth throughout the City. Major projects represented in the collection are: B.C. Place Stadium, Cambie Bridge, False Creek, Granville Mall, and Light Rail Transit.

Moving Image Collection

In 2005 Dyane Laurin appraised and described the Archives' moving image holdings. She also created guidelines for appraisal criteria, copyright and description for the moving image collection. Descriptions and condition reports for 27 films were completed. Films in the Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society of B.C. Division fonds were evaluated and recommendations for deaccessioning were made.

Cathy Yasui did a SLAIS Professional Experience Project recently. She was interested in gaining experience in scanning a variety of types of photographs. After instruction on our scanning procedures, she scanned negatives from CVA 447, the Walter Edwin Frost fonds, and also learned how to scan glass plate negatives. Finally, she identified various 19th century prints and scanned them.

Staff News

In mid-January, Heather Gordon joined the Archives' staff on site as Archives Manager. She had been on an 11-month temporary assignment as Project Lead for the Records and Archives Division's corporate records classification and retention scheduling project.

Glenn Dingwall, our first Digital Archivist, joined the Archives' staff on site February 6th after wrapping up his commitments with the Division's corporate records classification and retention scheduling project.

Megan Schlase is on temporary assignment as Reference Archivist in the reading room, with Nancy Mulligan filling in Megan's regular position as Archival Assistant.

Leslie Robinson is on a one-year maternity leave. Graham was born on November 15th, 2005. Congratulations to Leslie and her family!

Lorraine Sebastian has joined the staff as Leslie's maternity leave replacement. She will be with us until October.

Barbara Sage has returned to the City Clerk's Office on the 3rd floor of City Hall. Barbara was temporarily assigned to the Archives to assist with scanning project data entry, archival document prep work and photo order administration.

Scott Redgrove was recently appointed to the Archives' second Digital Archivist position. This position replaces the Archivist position vacated by Evelyn Peters McLellan earlier in 2005.

Carol Haber worked with the Vancouver Heritage Foundation to conduct a joint workshop on how to research house history. Megan Schlase conducted a similar workshop in February 2006.

Blair Galston has recently finished a Canadian Council of Archives Control of Holdings project describing the Gordon Price fonds, Harry Barratt fonds, and Green and Huckvale Advertising Ltd. fonds.

Archives staff member Leslie Robinson with baby Graham
Photo by Chak Yung

Archives in the Digital Environment - Challenges for a Digital Archivist

Digital equivalents to traditional forms of records have become ubiquitous in the modern world. E-mail, digital photographs, and word processing documents have become routine, even mundane means of writing down and distributing information. However, when we start to think about preserving digital records as evidence for the future, we quickly discover that preserving these objects is much more problematic than preserving their traditional paper analogs. Even more worrisome is the proliferation of new forms of records in the digital world that do not have paper equivalents: objects having content that is continuously in flux, or that depend on an interaction with the user.

Preserving digital records requires archivists to address new considerations. The physical media that digital information is stored on are much more fragile than traditional media, and in many cases may last only a few years before becoming unreadable. Moreover, digital records require some sort of technology to interpret them; some sort of machine must be used to

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render the sequence of 1s and 0s into a format that can be comprehended by humans. This technology continues to evolve and earlier technology becomes obsolete. Even if the storage media lasts indefinitely, you may lose the ability to interpret the specific file format that the record is stored in, or the ability to run the application required to view the file. And finally, because digital records can be altered easily, in many cases undetectably, you must make sure you can prove that the records you keep are what they claim to be, and that they have not been altered, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Archivists working with digital records must make sure that the records received by the archives are in a form suitable for long term preservation. If that is not the case, they must select an appropriate format for preservation and migrate the records to that new preservation format, taking care that all of the information crucial to providing context to the records and establishing their authenticity is properly migrated. After records are accessioned into the digital archives, archivists must also monitor the digital records in their custody in order to anticipate any changes to the hardware and software environment that would threaten their ability to continue to preserve and provide access to the records. The records also need to be monitored to make sure they do not become corrupted while in the electronic storage environment. Finally, they must also provide a means for users of the archives to find and view digital records. The methods and technologies used to deliver records that are born digital to archives users can also be used to provide digital copies of traditional records forms such as manuscripts, photographs, maps, and plans, improving the accessibility and potential for use of all the records in an archives' holdings.

VanRIMS

Records and Information Management Standard

Implementation at the Archives

The New Year began with a major re-organization effort at the Archives. As part of the Council-approved corporate-wide project to address the issues surrounding records management in the City, the Archives embarked on the implementation of the Vancouver Records and Information Standard VanRIMS) for all of the office files used by Archives staff.

The standardization of records management processes has long been viewed as integral to ensuring the efficiency, effectiveness, and financial and legal accountability of the City of Vancouver. It is also crucial to identifying the records that have ongoing value for the business and the history of the City, which should be sent to the Archives. However, there has never been a system in place to provide all City staff with a common method for organizing and retrieving information, or managing the retention, storage, and disposition of records.

The project began by conducting inventories of all City records. Records and Information Management staff analysed the results and developed the VanRIMS framework of an integrated classification scheme and retention schedules. This was followed by a period of departmental review and training, and in January 2006 two project clerks - Jill Prior and Mira Blazicevik - began the process of implementing the classifications throughout the Archives' offices. This has involved recording file lists, creating crosswalks to new classifications, labelling all folders, and in some cases, re-organizing office areas. Jill and Mira will be working with Archives staff through February to ensure the comprehensive implementation of the new system as the City works toward the coordinated management of its records and information.

Mira Blazicevik (L) and Jill Prior beside the Admin files
Photo by Chak Yung

Our Volunteers

Tania Ostman

Tania, one of our volunteers, has been working with us since 2005. Tania volunteers for Chak Yung and is working on the Archives' postcard collection. The postcard collection consists of more than 2,000 postcards, dating from the 1890s to the 1960s. Tania's major tasks include assigning an item number to each card, enclosing the cards in archival envelopes and boxes, identifying and describing the cards, and entering post card descriptions into the Archives' database system. Tania finds working with the postcards quite enjoyable. Most of the buildings depicted on the cards no longer exist, so in order to identify them, she has to play detective and consult various types of reference materials.

Tania lived in Victoria for five years and received a history degree from the University of Victoria. Besides volunteering at the Vancouver Archives, Tania also works for a First Nations art gallery in downtown Vancouver. To further her studies, Tania plans to go into archival studies or librarianship, since she is interested in preserving records and heritage materials. She is currently taking courses in history, archaeology and anthropology.

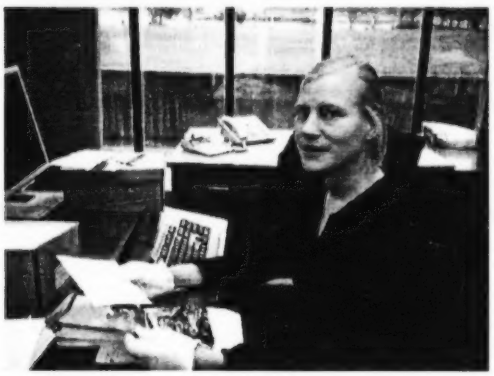


Photo by Chak Yung

Although Tania now lives in Richmond, she doesn't mind travelling the long distance to volunteer. She believes she will acquire valuable work experience from the City of Vancouver Archives, since it is one of the most well-established municipal archives in Canada.

Users of the Archives

Jean Mann, Past President, University Women's Club of Vancouver (UWCV)

Since August 2005, Jean has been immersed in the records of the University Women's Club in the Archives holdings to research the history of the Club for its 100th Anniversary. Founded in May 1907, the UWCV's primary aim has been the promotion of education for women, with consequent roles as advocates for women's interests and equality rights in general. Two of its earliest members, Evlyn Farris and Helen Gregory MacGill, rose to considerable prominence for their roles in promoting the status of women and in the passage of various legislation advancing women's interests. Evlyn Farris was also the first woman elected to the Senate of UBC, and Helen Gregory MacGill was instrumental in the women's suffragist movement. Jean will be compiling the fruits of her research, along with that of two other co-researchers, into a 200-page book, comprising both text and images from the Club's past, and relating the Club's history to that of the city and to the changing roles of women in society. A grant from the Vancouver Historical Society will assist with publishing costs, and the book is scheduled to be available when the Club celebrates its 100th anniversary, in conjunction with hosting the Canadian Federation of University Women, in the spring of 2007.

Photo by Chak Yung

Creative Use of Archival Photographs

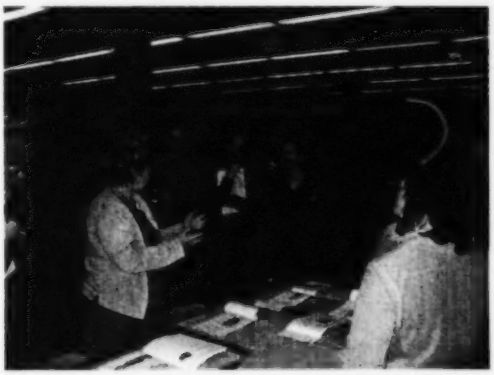
In December 2004 the Engineering Department devised a great plan for making the big, bland electrical boxes downtown into a canvas for vintage photographs of the city. Many electrical boxes in the downtown peninsula now display historic photographs from the City of Vancouver Archives. These boxes each show a street scene of the area where the box is located as it appeared in the past.

The aim of decorating the electrical boxes was not only to beautify the street, but to help prevent graffiti, since these boxes are often the target of spray paint and other types of vandalism. The photos are imprinted on a special wrap which goes on the boxes and then is coated with an anti-graffiti film. The eight electrical boxes currently sporting archival images are on the Granville Mall (400 to 900 blocks), with one at Granville and Cordova.

Thanks to all Records and Archives staff who contributed to this issue: Sue Bigelow, Glenn Dingwall, Carol Haber, Shaunna Moore, Megan Schlase, and Chak Yung.

How to Research the History of Your House workshop

In November 2005 the Archives hosted a joint workshop with the Vancouver Heritage Foundation on how to use archival records to research the history of houses in Vancouver. The workshop was led by former City of Vancouver Heritage Planner, Jeannette Hlavach. Carol Haber showed participants samples of records used for house and building research. Following the workshop some participants participated in a follow-up session at the Archives to research their own house history.



Carol Haber explains how to research house history. Photo courtesy Vancouver Heritage Foundation. Photograph by Elana Zysblat

Interesting Websites

The Largest One-Piece-One-Exposure Photo Enlargement in the World

The Archives of Ontario has a detailed web presentation on its work to preserve two photographs dated 1912 and 1913 that were found under a sub-floor at Queen's Park. Each photograph measures roughly 7 metres by 5.6 metres (28" X 18' 8½").

To view the presentation, go to:

http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/exhibits/freeland/index.html

Friends of the Vancouver City Archives

Who We Are

The Friends of the Vancouver City Archives was founded in 1993 to promote public awareness of the City of Vancouver Archives and its services and projects. Through its fundraising activities and special events, it strives to support the use of the Archives' holdings by the general public and the professions.

Annual General Meeting
March 26th, 2006
2:00 p.m.

at the City of Vancouver Archives

Don Luxton will speak on the history of Vancouver General Hospital, which is celebrating its 100th birthday this year.

The Friends welcome new members and supporters. If you want to help preserve Vancouver's documentary heritage, please join the Friends today.

Join the Friends of the Vancouver City Archives

You are invited to become a member of the Friends of the Vancouver City Archives. Annual membership fees are $20.00 per individual or $30.00 per family. Donations (over the regular membership fee) are also welcome. The Society has charitable status so is able to issue tax receipts. Benefits to members include occasional lectures, special events, the City of Vancouver Archives Newsletter, and "behind the scenes" tours. It is expected that there will be two or three meetings a year.

Membership forms are available by calling the City of Vancouver Archives at (604) 736-8561 or online at http://vancouver.ca/archives/getinvolved/membrenew.pdf.

Completed forms should be sent, along with payment, to:

Friends of the Vancouver City Archives
c/o City of Vancouver Archives
1150 Chestnut Street
Vancouver, BC V6J 3J9

You may also visit the Friends webpage on the Archives website: www.vancouver.ca/archives. Click on **Getting Involved** on the left sidebar and select **Friends of the Archives**.

Lectures and Special Events

On October 23rd, the Friends hosted a free talk by Jan Pierce about the history of Kitsilano. Jan curated the Kitsilano 100 exhibit which appeared in the Archives gallery from October 3rd through the new year. Her talk focussed on her research connected with the photographs in the exhibit.

Projects Funded by the Friends

J.S. Matthews Photograph Collection Description and Scanning Project
Under funds donated in April 2005, 165 photographs were scanned and 1,109 photographs were described to the item level. The Friends contributed $3,500 in October 2005 to continue the description work with this collection.

Friends of the Vancouver City Archives Board of Directors (elected March 13, 2005)

Chair	John Keenlyside
Vice President	Vacant
Treasurer	Chris McGregor
Secretary	Anita Bonson
Membership	Vacant
At Large	Rosalind Addison
At Large	Jean Barman
At Large	Janet Bingham
At Large	Wallace Gilby Craig
At Large	Margaret Etchell
At Large	Henry Ewert
At Large	Leonard McCann
At Large	Margaret Waddington
At Large	Merrick Walsh
At Large	Frances Woodward